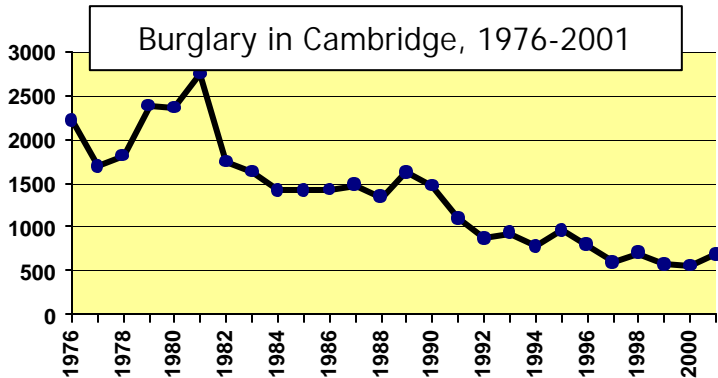


# Burglary

552 in 2000 · 688 in 2001 · 25% Increase



*Burglary* describes the unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or theft. The use of force to gain entry is not required to classify an offense as burglary. Burglary attempts are included in the total.

Burglary is considered a much graver crime than larceny, since it usually involves breaking into someone's home or business. Great diversity exists within the ranks of burglars: a great many are "crude," unrefined thieves who, with little finesse, will smash a window and enter an unoccupied house or building. Because long-term success at burglary involves innovation, risk, and proficiency, the crime is often associated with "professional," master thieves who disable alarm systems and steal oil paintings and oriental rugs.

The latter type of burglar—the professional thief who used to commit 200 to 300 housebreaks per year, many in wealthy residential locations—has become a dinosaur. He has been put out of business by priority prosecution programs, patrol and investigative strategies, and early detection of patterns. The demise of this "one-man crime wave" has caused burglary to plunge 71 percent since 1980 and 53 percent since 1990. Despite last years total for this crime having been the lowest the city had ever seen 2001 totals show a slight turn of events. This is partly due to the awakening of the "professional" burglar dinosaur, who is likely responsible for at least one of the burglary patterns identified this year.

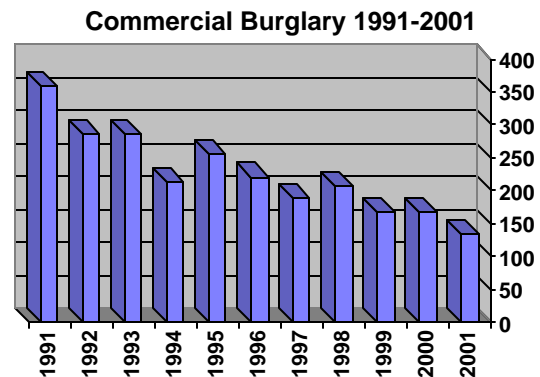
Burglaries in Cambridge are spread throughout the day, with more business breaks occurring at night and on weekends, and more residential breaks occurring during the workday. Seldom does a resident or business owner encounter a burglar, and only very rarely (except in the case of domestic burglaries) does a resident come to harm during a burglary.

For the purpose of analysis, the crime of burglary is divided into two categories: Commercial Burglary and Residential Burglary ("housebreaks"). Commercial breaks showed a 20% decrease in 2001, while housebreaks increased 44%. Together, showing an increase of 25%.

Type	2000	2001	Change
Commercial Burglary	168	135	-20%
Residential Burglary	384	553	+44%

## Commercial Burglary

Commercial burglary, or commercial breaks, describes the burglary of a business, government, or retail establishment. This crime has experienced decreases over the past 10 years of 62%.



Commercial burglars target a miscellany of establishments. The type of business targeted speaks volumes about the offender's likely status and style, and commercial breaks can therefore be categorized by the type of premises entered. Most breaks fall into one of six broad categories:

- **Smash & Grab** burglaries target display windows along major routes. The burglar runs or drives up, smashes the window, steals valuables from the immediate area of the window, and runs off. The entire enterprise may take less than a minute.
- **Retail** burglars pry or smash their way into stores, hair salons, restaurants, and other

locations with cash registers on the premises. They're hoping for cash left in the register or the safe. They may grab some cigarettes or a stack of lottery tickets on the way out. Retail burglars who target restaurants specifically often cross multiple jurisdictions, breaking into similar franchises, looking for safes.

- **Business** burglars enter real estate offices, law firms, technology companies, and other offices, looking for laptop computers and other expensive equipment.
- **Construction Site** thieves are a special breed of burglars who know how to select, steal, and sell expensive power tools, building supplies, and heavy equipment. They are often in the business themselves, and may have done some sub-contract work on the site that they target.
- **Church** burglars are usually homeless individuals with substance abuse problems. They enter lightly-secured houses of worship, looking for petty cash and easily fenced items.
- **School** burglars are generally juveniles, breaking into their own schools to vandalize or to steal computers and other expensive goods that they see every day.

Type	1999	2000	2001
Retail	40	32	20
Business Offices	23	20	16
Construction Sites	23	36	11
Restaurants/Bars	21	21	17
Churches	13	7	1
Schools	9	6	12
Jewelry Store	8	1	0
Cleaners/Laundry	7	9	3
Clothing Stores	7	1	0
Hair/Beauty	5	3	7
Auto Sales/Service	2	5	3
Government/City	0	4	1
Other	9	23	44

Since the beginning of 2001, Cambridge has seen a steady decline in this crime. The first quarter recorded a prolific pattern of breaks into business offices in search of high-end electronics such as laptop and desktop computers.

The second and third quarters of 2001 showed one pattern of Hair salon breaks between the months of July and August. These breaks occurred all across the city. July was also hot in Inman Square where seven commercial breaks were reported during the one calendar month. While commercial breaks into retail establishments have remained steady as a

hotspot for breaks, this year's trend of breaks into business offices starkly contrasts last year's pattern of construction breaks.

## Geography

Kendall Square/MIT which peaked in 2000 due to an ongoing problem with construction site breaks has returned to its regular level of commercial breaks making it again one of the least likely places for a commercial break to take place.

Unfortunately Inman Square did not follow suit and is currently the most likely place for a commercial break to occur. This was due to a continued trend of smash and grab breaks into stores in and around this neighborhood.

Cambridgeport/Riverside, which reported a strikingly low total of two breaks in 2000, has climbed back up to the middle of the field in 2001 with a total of 12 breaks.

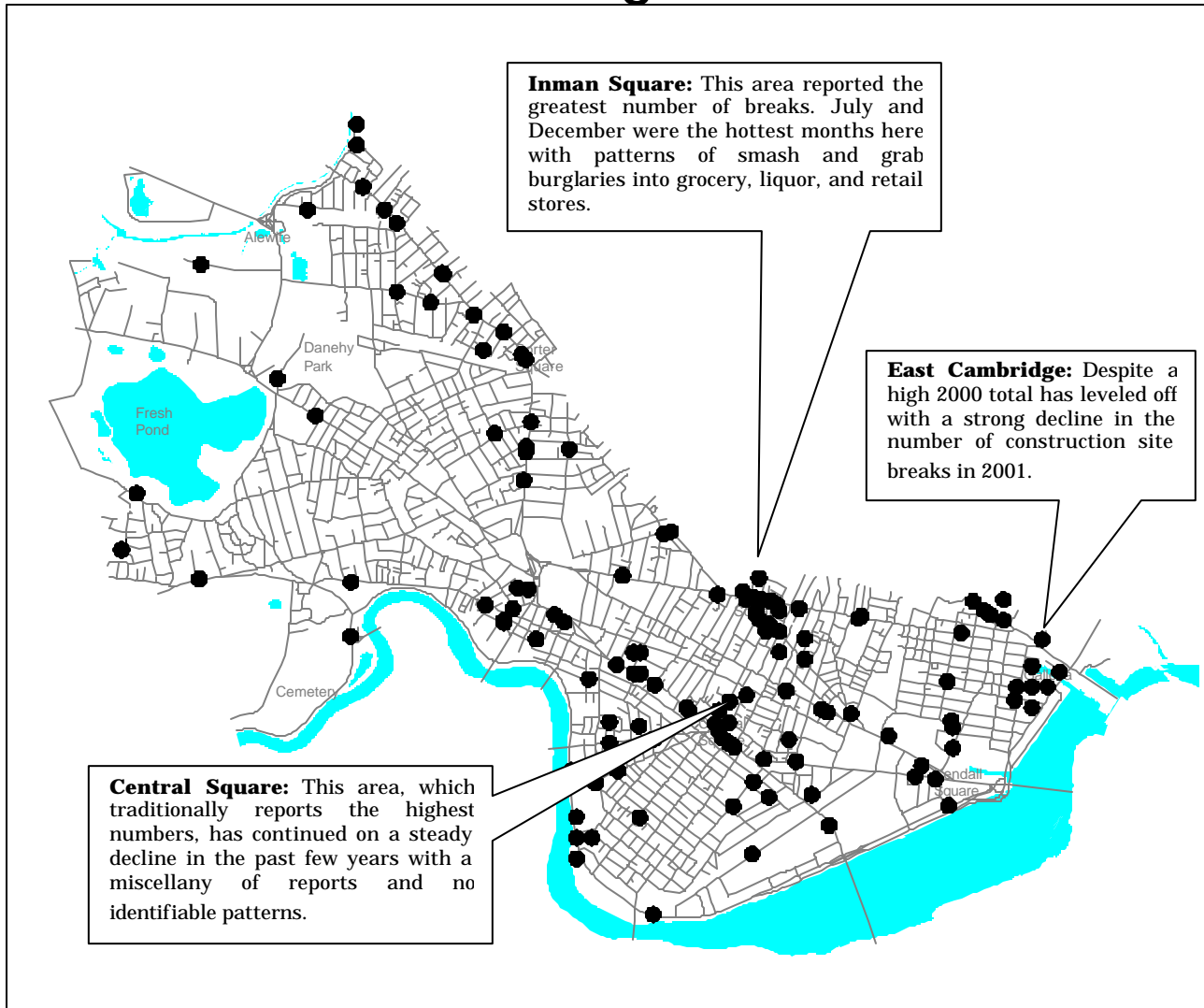
### Geographic Breakdown of Commercial Burglaries

Business District	1999	2000	2001
Galleria/East Cambridge	19	21	16
Kendall Square/MIT	7	30	9
Inman Square	17	26	26
Central Square	42	25	23
Cambridgeport/Riverside	9	2	12
Bay Square/Upper B.way	12	14	10
Harvard Square	19	10	10
1500-1900 Mass. Ave.	7	8	6
Porter Square	23	15	15
Alewife/West Cambridge	12	17	8

Inman Square saw a tremendous increase in 2000 with a wide array of breaks reported. This increase has stayed in 2001 due to a high number in the month of July as well as a pattern of breaks into grocery stores, after hours, along Cambridge Street during the month of December. An arrest was made in these breaks when officers responded to the second store broken into in one night and found the suspect still inside the store.

Alewife/ West Cambridge saw a decrease in 2001 as it had been heavily targeted in the Laundromat breaks identified in 2000, which did not return this year.

# Commercial Burglaries in 2001



## Day and Time

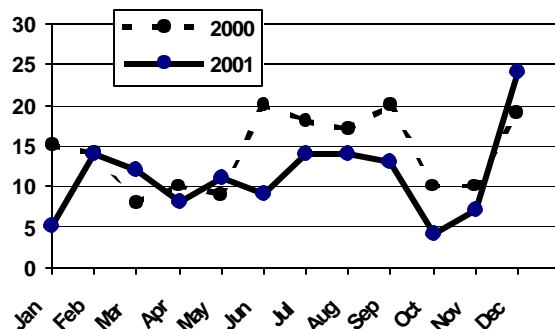
Commercial burglaries, naturally, are a nighttime phenomenon, occurring between 9:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. The most frequent four-hour time block is between midnight and 4:00 a.m. Very often, the day the burglary occurred is unknown—especially if it happened over the weekend, which is most common. Thursday is also a popular day of the week for this crime.

## Offenders

The Cambridge Police Department arrested 10 people for commercial burglary in 2001 — all men — ranging in age from 19 to 44, most of whom were caught in the act by officers responding to alarms.

## Seasonal Variations

As with many crimes, we do not see many predictable seasonal patterns in commercial breaks. We usually see at least one summertime spike and, for some reason, November and December have been unusually high for the past few years.

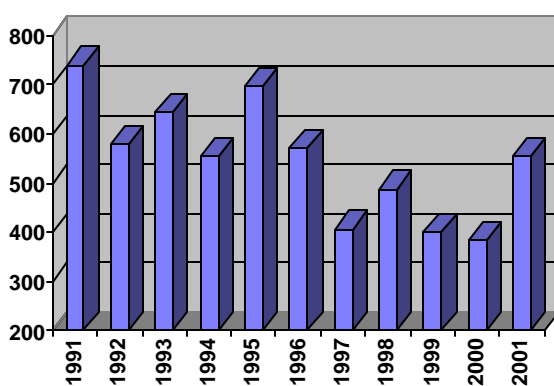


## Residential Burglary

Residential burglaries, or "housebreaks," increased 44 percent between 2000 and 2001, from 384 incidents to 553. 2000's total was the lowest reported in over 30 years. The increase this year however large only represents a return to the total numbers seen just a few years ago in 1996.

Housebreaks have been affected greatly by the demise of the "professional burglar." The traditional summertime burglary pattern, which was once responsible for 200 to 300 breaks a year, has largely disappeared.

**Residential Burglary, 1991-2001**



## Geography

Predictably, residential burglaries are most likely to occur in densely populated residential neighborhoods. Traditionally the neighborhoods with the highest population and population density have also had the highest housebreak totals. Neighborhood statistics below show both the totals and the per capita totals:

The housebreak totals per neighborhood show that, in 2001, Mid-Cambridge had the highest total, followed by, Area 4, Riverside, North Cambridge, and Cambridgeport. These neighborhoods always rank high because of the large, dense residential population, many of whom live in apartments.

When population is factored in, and housebreaks per 10,000 residents are calculated, we find that Area 4, Mid-Cambridge, Inman/ Harrington, and East Cambridge had the highest *per capita* totals (or the highest housebreak *rates*). It makes sense to look at housebreaks by population, because the number of residential units in a neighborhood is the primary factor behind that neighborhood's housebreak total.

**Housebreaks by Neighborhood  
Per 10,000 Residents\***

Neighborhood	1990s Avg.	2000	2001
East Cambridge	64	55	64
MIT	*	*	*
Inman/Harrington	60	35	65
Area 4	91	78	102
Cambridgeport	78	47	62
Mid-Cambridge	82	61	87
Riverside	42	36	58
Agassiz	50	39	50
Peabody	49	30	37
West Cambridge	50	25	50
North Cambridge	64	32	55
Highlands	*	*	*
Strawberry Hill	44	19	19

\*These totals are obtained by dividing the housebreaks in the neighborhood by the neighborhood population, then multiplying by 10,000. The neighborhood population is taken from the 1990 census, so figures are not exact. The per capita totals for MIT and Cambridge Highlands were not calculated because both housebreaks and neighborhood populations are statistically insignificant.

**Housebreaks by Neighborhood**

Neighborhood	1990s Average	1999	2000	2001	Change 00-01	% of 01 Total	1990s Rank	2001 Rank
East Cambridge	37	23	32	37	+16%	7%	9	9
MIT	4	2	2	0	N.C.	0%	12	12
Inman/Harrington	43	29	25	47	+88%	8%	7	6
Area 4	60	48	51	67	+31%	12%	4	2
Cambridgeport	71	42	43	56	+30%	10%	2	5
Mid-Cambridge	107	48	79	113	+43%	20%	1	1
Riverside	44	26	38	61	+61%	11%	6	3
Agassiz	26	26	20	26	+30%	5%	10	10
Peabody	55	75	34	41	+21%	7%	5	8
West Cambridge	41	36	21	41	+95%	7%	8	7
North Cambridge	68	37	34	59	+74%	11%	3	4
Highlands	3	1	0	0	N.C.	0%	13	13
Strawberry Hill	12	7	5	5	N.C.	1%	11	11

The one neighborhood with the highest total number of housebreaks in 2001 was the Mid-Cambridge neighborhood which, had been seeing good decreases throughout the latter half of the 90's. However, due to a continual pattern of housebreaks in the summer and fall, this area has been brought back to its position as the number one area for housebreaks.

The largest increase was seen in the West Cambridge neighborhood where the total number of housebreaks nearly doubled from 200 to 2001, from 21 to 41 incidents. This increase did not go unnoticed, and is particularly telling of the changing face of crime in the new millennium. Eleven of this neighborhood's housebreaks fit the category of "professional," with items targeted including silverware, oriental rugs, and expensive jewelry. This category of housebreaks once dominated the city topping 200 to 300 breaks a year. Fortunately this pattern of West Cambridge, professional housebreaks subsided when an individual was arrested in Somerville, and charged with numerous breaks in that city as well as possessing items taken from these West Cambridge breaks.

The second greatest increase was seen in the Inman/Harrington neighborhood, which increased from 25 to 47 incidents between 200 and 2001. Again, this increase did not go unnoticed and late summer, early fall patterns in this neighborhood helped push it's totals to where they are. The same individual arrested for West Cambridge Housebreaks was likely responsible for some of this neighborhoods breaks.

Despite the increases in West Cambridge and Inman/Harrington it is clearly evident that the highest concentration of breaks is in the Mid-Cambridge and Area 4 neighborhoods. Patterns in these neighborhoods were identified in nearly every month of the year. Seven of the city's 23 housebreak arrests came from these neighborhoods.

## Day and Time

Forty two percent of housebreaks occur during the workday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. 20% occur during the evening, from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., and 21% occur overnight between 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Each time period features a different type of burglar:

Daytime burglars count on the fact that the residents are not at home. They spend more time in the residence and steal more valuables. They are most likely to strike large apartment buildings in densely-packed residential areas where they will be more anonymous in the visible daylight hours. Their entrances tend to be crude: kicking in the front door or breaking glass.

Nighttime burglars count on the fact that their residents are asleep. They are quieter, entering

through an unlocked door or window, or by prying or jimmying a window. They spend a short amount of time in the residence and steal only property that they can carry in a single trip—usually lone items, like a VCR, a purse, or a laptop computer. They are more likely to target houses, as well as apartments.

Evening burglars have the most gall (or the least sense) of all. They enter homes knowing that the residents are likely to be at home and awake. They creep through unlocked windows or doors, target cash or other small valuables, and get out quick. Almost all evening burglaries target houses, which typically have more rooms, most of which are vacant, and more points of entry.

Days of the week make a difference as well. Wednesday and Thursday are the days of the week when the most reports are received. Followed by Monday when a large number of reports are received that occurred over the preceding weekend.

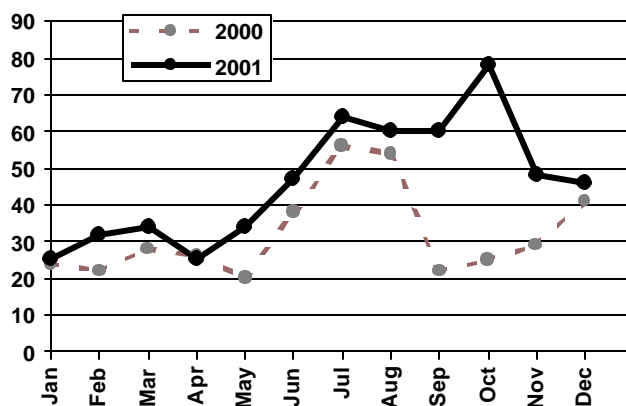
## Offenders

The Cambridge Police Department arrested 23 people—all men except one—for housebreaks in 2001. Ages ranged from 14 to 52. One of those arrested were juveniles.

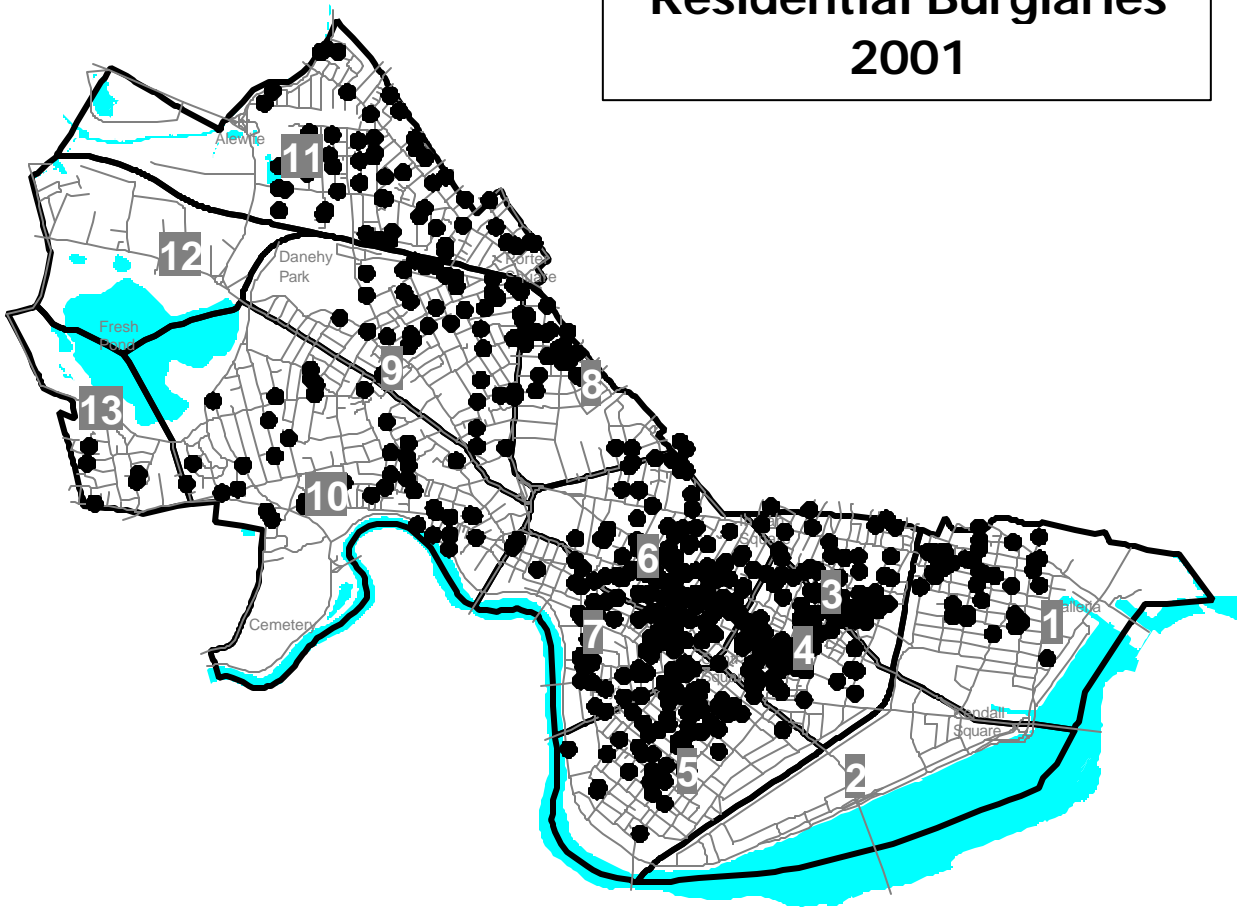
Six of the arrestees were homeless another seven were from Cambridge the rest were one each from various surrounding cities and towns.

## Seasonal Variations

For the past twelve years summertime peaks have been a regular occurrence, followed by a quiet fall and a slight rise into the close of the year. This year mirrored 2000 every month until September when an expected decrease didn't occur. October was the hottest month of 2001 reporting just under 80 incidents. Hopefully, these late year highs will not continue in 2002.



## Residential Burglaries 2001



### Neighborhood Notes

- 1. East Cambridge:** ended 2001 at its 1990's average although it is up slightly from its 2000 total.
- 2. MIT:** ended 2001 far below its 1990's average, with no incidents reported.
- 3. Inman/Harrington:** ended 2001 only 9% above its 1990's average. This, despite having the second greatest neighborhood increase from 2000 to 2001, 25 to 47 incidents an increase of 88%.
- 4. Area 4:** ended 2001 10% above its 1990's average, and the second greatest number of reports for the year, 67. This neighborhood also has the highest crime rate per 10,000 residents, at 102.
- 5. Cambridgeport:** ends 2001 27% below its 1990's average. Increase from 2000 to 2001 of 30%, with concentrations along Pearl, Magazine, and Auburn Streets.
- 6. Mid-Cambridge:** ends 2001 45% over its 1990's average, with an increase from 2000 to 2001 of 43%. The greatest number of incidents occurred here with concentrations along Harvard, Inman, and Lee Streets.
- 7. Riverside:** ends 2001 28% above its 1990's average. Increased from 2000 to 2001 by 61%.

**8. Agassiz:** ends 2001 at its 1990's average, with a 30% increase from 2000 to 2001. Concentrations in this neighborhood near Porter Square were identified patterns were observed.

**9. Peabody:** ends 2001 34% below its 1990's average. Scattered breaks with no identifiable patterns.

**10. West Cambridge:** ends 2001 at its 1990's average. Greatest increase from 2000 to 2001 at 95%. "Professional" burglary patterns identified here.

**11. North Cambridge:** ends 2001 15% below its 1990's average. Increase from 2000 to 2001 of 74%. Early morning housebreak patterns identified here as well as numerous arrests.

**12. Cambridge Highlands:** ends 2001 below its 1990's average with no housebreaks reported for the second year in a row.

**13. Strawberry Hill:** ends 2001 140% below its 1990's average. And remains the single neighborhood with the fewest breaks per capita at 19 per 10,000.